

# Theses about the poietic principle of metonymy

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**Abstract.** The paper observes the relation of fictional/figural discourses to language-games that are active in reality. The starting point for the discussion is the “theory of two contexts” by Arne Merilai, the basic idea of which is distinguishing between fictional and factual speech acts on the basis of their different contexts of truth value. It seems to be justified to expand it to the whole sphere of figurality. After that the paper views John Gibson’s Wittgensteinian theory of fiction as an archive of standards/etalons of language-games and a laboratory of reshaping and creating these standards. The fictional/figural sphere can be described as the area of possibility that creates language-games of reality via poiesis. The article describes some cases where the logic of figural sphere is introduced directly into real political discourse, forcing the reality to act according to the rules of art, but thus excluding the ethical freedom of our real-life language-games. It means that there exists a certain principle of metonymy between the figural sphere as archive and laboratory of standards, on the one hand, and the language-games of reality, on the other hand, while violation of that principle involves a danger of losing the reconciliatory power of fictionality/figurality that, according to Jaak Tomberg, is a significant function of literature as a human practice. There are several possibilities for further analysis: the cases where the danger can be turned into something positive; the problems and gains of art forms (certain forms of the theatre, happenings) that use techniques of intrusion into reality; the question if such violation of the “principle of metonymy” is specifically connected with modernist avant-gardism or not.

## 1. Starting points

We can distinguish between two textual/discursive spheres – factual discourse on one side and poetic/fictional discourse on the other side (we might call the latter figural discourse). By factual discourse we understand different descriptions of the world, depictions of reality and its circumstances – it is the discourse in which people believe that language has a direct truth-relation with

reality. Besides descriptions it also consists of declarations, performative speech acts that establish certain states of affairs or of reality (such as marriage, or giving a person a scholarly degree, or political elections where changes in reality are made by purely linguistic acts). Figural discourses (the use of the plural is intentional here) are characterized by the fact that the validity of the speech acts performed in these discourses is limited by a certain horizon (literary, poetic, artistic etc.) and their relation to reality seems to be secondary, mediated, in need of some figural interpretation techniques in order to have its specific validity.

Of course, the distinction cannot be made on the basis of purely textual features, as it always depends on contexts and conventions; however, the distinction is actual and practical, not merely theoretical. This distinction is my starting point.

It is based on an original conception by Arne Merilai, his “theory of two contexts”, which is meant to be an explanation of the relations between fictional and factual language use while retaining the possibility of analysing both uses within the same theory of linguistic behaviour. He proposes (referring, by the way, to Juri Lotman’s ideas about literature as secondary modelling system that are one of his sources of inspiration) a scheme in which the difference between fictional and factual speech acts is not a result of some essential difference between the two, but is simply a difference of context of their truth validity (see Fig. 1). Merilai writes: “In the narrow, or linguistic-semantic context, the type of the utterance is interpreted generally, against the background of possible worlds, while in the broad, or semantic-pragmatic context, the particular meaning gets fixed according to the actuality” (Merilai 2007a: 386).<sup>1</sup>

Although Merilai speaks mainly about fictionality, it is possible to widen the scheme also to cover other cases of figural language use (including poetry), because the basic criterion in this theory is not actually the notion of fabulation that should distinguish fictional and factual speech, but merely the distinction between the contexts of validity of speech acts. The focus on contexts of truth validity rather than some fixed criterion of fictionality makes it possible to interpret also other forms of poetic language use as phenomena of the “narrow context”, so that fiction becomes one of many species of figurality (fiction is

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<sup>1</sup> The article can be found in digital form at <http://lepo.it.da.ut.ee/~amerilai/Pragma.html>. A more elaborated version of Merilai’s theory is presented in Merilai 2003.

metonymy of a specific kind in relation to the factual language use<sup>2</sup>). Thus, figural discourses are characterized mainly by the fact that their context of truth value is not immediate and concrete, but rather is a generalization that needs interpretation/translation and is waiting for a concretization according to reality. This is important for understanding the level of abstractness of my further considerations.

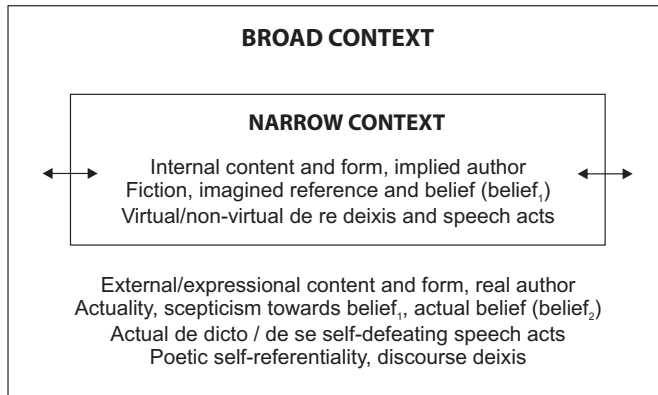


Figure 1. Merilai's scheme of the theory of two contexts (Merilai 2007: 386).

There exist cases where transfers or “translations” from figural discourses to the factual are made – for example, if poetic or fictional means are used in an autobiography or in political or historiographic discourses (all these are ways of describing/establishing identity – autobiography regarding personal identity, and the others concerning collective identity, respectively). It is possible to transfer different aspects: content (themes, problems), structural peculiarities, modalities, specific silent “blind spots” of the chosen speech mode etc.

For example, several autobiographical books have appeared in Estonian literature in recent years that abandon the traditional mode of self-account and use techniques that are characteristic of figural texts. Tõnu Õnnepalu has written several autobiographical books, of which *The Spring and the Summer and* (*Kevad ja suvi ja*, 2009) is maybe the most articulated example of what I mean: this is a diary about the writer's everyday actions and thoughts, but it is

<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of the paper I will broaden this metonymy into a generalization that characterizes the whole sphere of figurality, as I am broadening the character of fiction to figurality as a whole here.

written in free verse, so that the experience of living is filtered immediately through some poetically distancing sight; the poetical mode allows to show the ambiguity of the experience of the “now”-moment and brings the diary out of its everyday simplicity. The writer and philosopher Madis Kõiv has written six volumes of memoirs *Studia memoriae* (1994–2010) that explore only his childhood until the age of 15. These memoirs knowingly ignore the coherence of memory that is usually presumed to underlie texts of such type; instead, Kõiv wanders in labyrinths of the process of memorizing and recollecting, so that the text often resembles stream of consciousness, moving between different possible fabulations about what happened, although in principle it is a factual text. The aim and modality of these books is not the objectivism of personal history, but rather seeking a state where recollections would come to mind as though for the first time, only at the moment of writing. A recent example is the book by the writer and diplomat Jaak Jõerüüt *A Changing One* (*Muutlik*, 2010) – a diary written during a year, telling about his activities as a diplomat in Riga and about his changing moods and thoughts. However, the temporal order is broken, the diary entries are not presented in their real sequence, and large portions of the book are temporally turned inside out, moving backwards in time. With the simple figural step of recomposing a year-long period of time, the essence of time, its non-teleological nature is thematized and the possibility of “eternity of moment” accentuated, without losing the factual credibility of the text.<sup>3</sup>

We can find this kind of rhetorical transfer also in the spheres that play a significant role in creating and maintaining collective identity, e.g. the figures that shape the consciousness of history (“700-year-long night of slavery” in the Estonian case, or the figure of “the Dark Ages” in the case of the Medieval epoch, or “the Thaw” in the case of the Khrushchev era); in fact, every narrative about a nation’s history follows certain patterns that are taken from the sphere of figural discourse – the scholar whose work elaborating on the concept of figural techniques in historiography is best known is probably Hayden White (see, e.g., White 1999).

Also political discourse often uses rhetorical techniques borrowed from figural discourse. The simplest examples can be found in slogans of election campaigns (e.g., punning, such as “Aitab!”, meaning both “that’s enough” and “[our party] helps”; or “Parem Eesti”, meaning both “better Estonia” and

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<sup>3</sup> For a more thorough analysis of Õnnepalu and Kõiv from this perspective, see Pilv (2010) (in Estonian, but with an abstract in English).

“right-wing Estonia”). A vivid example is provided by a phrase of George W. Bush when he gave a cause for the bailout of major companies at the beginning of the economic crisis in September 2008 – the main message that all the media caught up for headlines was formulated as a poetic figure, as Bush gave special power to his idea using a rhyming pun: “The rescue effort we’re negotiating is not aimed at Wall Street; it is aimed at your street.”

Intuition says that there is actually nothing special in such blending – it happens anywhere every day; but more thorough thinking might still raise questions concerning some principles of our use of language – especially when problems of ethics are taken into account as will be shown below.

## 2. Poietic laboratory of establishing the reality

Let us move closer to the heart of the matter. John Gibson, the American theoretician of aesthetics and philosopher of language, proposed a new view on the nature of fictional texts and their relation to the real world. According to Gibson, the different approaches to the problem of the relation between fiction and reality cannot properly solve the ambivalent nature of fiction. On the one hand, the view that fictional texts somehow represent the real world overlooks the peculiar traits that distinguish fiction from factual texts and in fact reduces fiction to a mere illustration or allegory of reality. On the other hand, the theories that claim the autonomy of the fictional text, that is, claim that there is nothing in a fictional text that would correspond to anything in the real world in the strict sense and instead of this a novel or film creates its own world, overlook the fact that people read literary works not only for literature’s own sake, not only for experiencing the style and power of imagination, but also for their own life; literary works can have impact on the way the people lead their lives.<sup>4</sup> So there is a constant ambivalence between the claims that fiction has no truth value and the fact that it has effect on people’s decisions about the truth in their own real life, i.e. fiction still seems to have a certain truth value.

In order to avoid these problems, John Gibson (2004) proposes his own approach that is inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein’s theory of language-games presented in his *Philosophical Investigations*. In it, among other things, Wittgen-

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<sup>4</sup> Gibson refers to works by Catherine Wilson, Susan Feigin and Gregory Currie in the first case and to Peter Lamarque, Lubomir Doležel and J. Hillis Miller in the second case.

stein gives an example of the etalon or standard of metre that exists physically in Paris. In paragraph 50 of *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein writes: “There is *one* thing, of which one can say neither that it is one metre long, nor that it is not one metre long, and that is the standard of metre in Paris. – But this is, of course, not to ascribe any extraordinary property to it, but only to mark its peculiar role in the language-game of measuring with a metre-rule.”<sup>5</sup>

Then Wittgenstein changes the example – instead of the standard of metre, he writes about imaginable standards of colours, or, more exactly, of the sample of sepia colour that would be preserved in Paris like the standard of metre. He writes: “Then it will make no sense to say of this sample either that it is of this colour or that it is not. We can put it like this: This sample is an instrument of the language used in ascriptions of colour. In this language-game it is not something that is represented, but is an instrument of representation.”

Gibson takes the example and transforms it into a problem of literature. Fictions do not so much represent the real world or any other imaginary, possible worlds, the core characteristic of fiction is not to mime some world (mimetically), but rather they act as an archive of standards of how we speak about “terms and concepts that describe significant sorts of human activity and response, that bring to view ways in which human lives can assume significance, come undone, thrive and so on” (Gibson 2004: 120). Literary texts, according to Gibson, are such archived standards for those extremely complex representational practices that are designated for example by such concepts as “love”, “suffering”, “exploitation” or “devotion”. Literature “offers us a shared fabric out of which we can weave such intricate visions of our world” (*ibid.*: 121). Such standards “open up a way of seeing the world [...] Literature shows us reality, but at a level we might call *foundational* rather than *representational*” (*ibid.*: 122).<sup>6</sup>

It seems to me that Gibson’s further elaborations of this idea in his monograph *Fiction and the Weave of Life* (2007) move in a direction somewhat different from that of my own thoughts, so maybe he would not agree with my conclusions that I am about to make from the same starting point.

I think that the role of literature (and figural language techniques in general) is not only to be the archive of the etalons or standards of language-games we live by; it is actually also the laboratory where the standards are created, experimented with and recreated, and that is why the literary field has

<sup>5</sup> *Philosophical Investigations* are cited according to Wittgenstein 1997.

<sup>6</sup> See also a similar approach in the same collection of essays (Harrison 2004).

a special position among other modes of language activity – that is why it is (like arts in general) free from pragmatic constraints and limitations, why it is very problematic to take a nasty character as an insult to its prototype and why it is natural to read a novel or watch a film through the filter of the disclaimer that “any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental”. It is like a polygon where a game of reality is played in order to experiment with the ways in which we can act (in the sense of language activity) in reality.

In essence, this is actually nothing new – it is the principle of *poiesis*, building the world by word, and the intuition is expressed for example in the Bible, the Gospel according to John: “In the beginning there was the Word”, or in Genesis: “And God said ‘Let there be light’ and there was light”. In the Estonian literary sphere, the poet and novelist Viivi Luik, in her quite well-known essay “A word is more than a word” (“Sõna on rohkem kui sõna”, written in 2005), speaks about several cases in which she started to see certain phenomena only after someone had formulated these in a poem or a novel. For example, she writes about a novel by Mati Unt titled *Autumn Ball* (*Sügisball*, 1979),<sup>7</sup> which was one of the most important Estonian novels of the late Soviet period. The action of *Autumn Ball* takes place in Mustamäe, a residential district of high-rise blocks of flats in Tallinn that was built in the 1960s. Viivi Luik claims: “Before *Autumn Ball* no one knew that Mustamäe existed” (Luik 2006: 118). She means that the novel by Mati Unt created the standards of how to treat Mustamäe in our language-games, standards for conceptualizing the experience of a modern Soviet high-rise residential district. By today, the image of Mustamäe is quite inseparable from the novel.<sup>8</sup>

It means that in the shadow of any *mimesis* there exists a primordial *poiesis* – a narrative or a poem that appears to act as a representation of reality, representing something only to the degree to which it has actually founded the mental and discursive standard for the reality it seems to represent. This is one

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<sup>7</sup> The novel has been translated into English as *Autumn Ball. Scenes of City Life* (Tallinn: Perioodika, 1985; trans. Mart Aru).

<sup>8</sup> In 2008, a conference dedicated to the novel and its role in speaking of modern urban environment took place (see Laaniste, Tomberg 2010). The essay by Luik has been a crucial text for both Merilai in his article about *poiesis* (Merilai 2007b) and Jaak Tomberg in his monograph *The Reconciliatory Purpose of Literature* (*Kirjanduse lepitav otstarve*; Tomberg 2011: 88–89).

possible answer to the riddle of literature that seems to exist as a parallel world outside our real world, yet is simultaneously read as if it were life.<sup>9</sup>

An important aspect of this is that the figural language sphere as the laboratory of these standards recreates, remodels, questions the existing language-games, offering parallel or alternative rules. Estonian literary theorist Jaak Tomberg recently published a monograph titled *The Reconciliatory Purpose of Literature* (*Kirjanduse lepitav otstarve*, 2011), in which he shows how literature, by creating alternative worlds or speaking modes that are not reducible to the real world and its language, has reconciliatory value and redeems people from the necessity of the limited actuality of our life and world, offering to people a liberating and infinite sphere of possibility (of course, this is but a brief and reductive summary of Tomberg's nuanced theory). Translating it into my present terms – literature as the archive of standards of language-games is also a laboratory where the standards are broken if a language-game has become unproductive or repressive.

All this can be presented as follows:

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<sup>9</sup> Viewing literature – and the figural language sphere in general – as the archive and laboratory of language-games of culture seems to have a certain similarity or structural overlapping with the Lotmanian approach to art as a secondary modelling system, especially with his thoughts about literature/art as having certain common elements with game as a tool for creating models of the world and of acting in the world (see Lotman's theses from 1967 in Lotman 1998). Of course in the light of such an approach the question arises in what sense art is a *secondary* modelling system (in other words – how can the archive of standards of language-games be secondary in relation to these language-games). However, in his article from 1981 titled "Text in text" Lotman indicates that this secondarity is a question of methodological operability, because on the practical level of cultural communication (which is always the basic level in Wittgensteinian thought perspective), especially in case of art, language (as code – the "primary modelling system") and text "change their places": "Text is given to community earlier than language, and language "is calculated" on the basis of text" (Lotman 1992: 150). Merilai also touches upon the question of secondarity from his perspective: "The secondary modelling system that has concentrated around the poetic function enters the horizontality of ordinary language-use on the vertical axis, whereas the secondary (or self-referential) becomes the main aim and therefore primary; the usually primary (or referential) can be made virtual and therefore it remains secondary – a spring-board, a stage prop ..." (Merilai 2007a: 388).



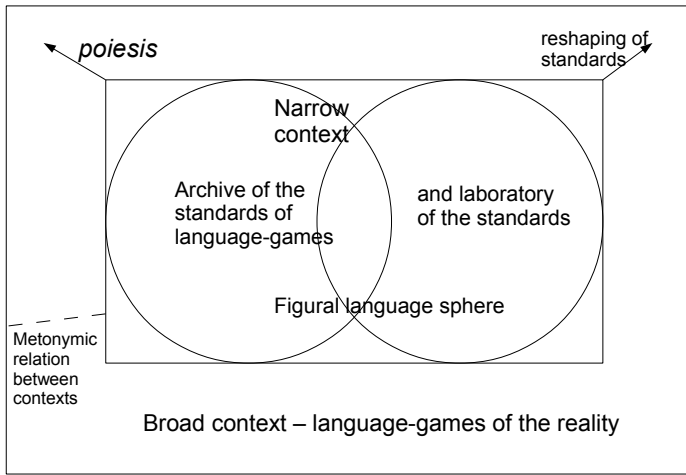


Figure 2. Relations between the figural sphere of language and language-games of reality (modification of Merilai's scheme).

We could find numerous examples of how some literary work or literary phenomenon has preceded the rise of some concepts or discourse modes in real life (such as Dostoyevsky's depiction of complex internal features of humans that preceded psychoanalysis; or the term *Kafkaesque* that was used to describe the absurdity of censorship and bureaucracy in Soviet society), but I would like to make a brief mention of two instances that may be especially illustrative on the background of our "normal" language-games. The first is the phenomenon of *shishōsetsu* or "I-novel" in Japanese literature. It peaked during the second and third decades of the 20th century and is characterized by an autobiographical effect, so that often these novels were perceived as accounts of the author's personal life. As more detailed examination shows, most of the Japanese "I-novels" were actually fictions and their peculiar effect came from the fact that they employed the viewpoint of interior personal consciousness that was new in the Japanese literary tradition, which had been more used to an objectifying and collective scope even in case of personal diaries. The period of emergence of *shishōsetsu* was the epoch of Japanese cultural "modernization" (i.e., westernization), and it is remarkable that ways of speaking of the "modern

self” that consists of personal interior singularity were introduced via texts that were actually fictions.<sup>10</sup>

The other case is quite a new literary “genre” – “autism fiction” that tries to depict autistic experience. Autism is a disorder of neural development in case of which the person’s ability to engage in social interaction and communication is impaired or restricted, while at the same time their intellectual abilities and emotional needs can be similar to “normal” (or, using the term coined by autists themselves, “neurotypic”) people. This raises the question which should be the language that would allow to express autistic experience without stereotyping the autists – and the main question is not only whether the speaking mode makes autists better understood by “neurotypicals”, but also whether the speaking mode allows autists to express themselves. As the philosopher Ian Hacking has said:

I believe that the genre is helping to bring into being an entire mode of discourse, cementing ways in which we have recently begun to talk, and will talk, about autism. It is developing a language, or, if you will, a new language game, one that is being created before our eyes and ears. This speech is, in turn, creating or extending a way for very unusual people – namely, autistic ones – to be, to exist, to live. (Hacking 2009: 501)

So – it is the real *poiesis* that creates existence.

### 3. Ethical aspect: the principle of metonymy and its violation

Of course, the examples of the standard of metre in Paris or the standards of Mustamäe created by Mati Unt are but superficial examples, for the literary fabric from which the weave of life is woven (to use Gibson’s figure) consists not only of themes and terms, but also of style, modulation, speech registers, zones of silence etc. Of course, a constant struggle is going on between actual language-games and the experimental products of the literary laboratory – and the defence mechanism of literature in that struggle consists of its

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<sup>10</sup> The three main analyses of *shishōsetsu* are Fowler (1988), Hijiya-Kirshner (1996) and Suzuki (1996) (the first of these can also be accessed in the digital library of the University of California Press – <http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/>; here, I thank Japanologists Alari Allik and Lauri Kitsnik for their helpful guidance.)

aforementioned specific attribute: literature can always defend itself, saying that in a strict sense it designates nothing, it is only a game. At the same time, occupying the field of game in the linguistic sphere, literature also hides the fact that any language-game is actually a game – the fact must be hidden in everyday life in order to maintain the coherence of human practices. So the relations between literature and reality are very complex.

I would like to point at one of such complexities in which the aspect of ethics manifests itself.

In his Nobel Lecture, Joseph Brodsky spoke about the purifying and liberating function of literature. Poetry and literature act as liberators thanks to the fact that literary experience is a private one and educates the taste of readers, thus weaning them from the tendency to give in to political ideologies:

A work of art, of literature especially, and a poem in particular, addresses a man *tete-a-tete*, entering with him into direct – free of any go-betweens – relations. [...] It is for this reason that art in general, literature especially, and poetry in particular, is not exactly favored by the champions of the common good, masters of the masses, heralds of historical necessity. [...] For a man with taste, particularly literary taste, is less susceptible to the refrains and the rhythmical incantations peculiar to any version of political demagoguery. (Brodsky 1988: 240–243)

This seems quite convincing. However, among Brodsky's arguments are also claims that the crimes of Lenin, Hitler and Mao are connected to the fact that their literary experience was not deep enough, although, as he says, Mao even wrote poetry. At this point, for me, the question arises – was the poetry of Mao Zedong not poetry in the proper sense? If we study Mao's poems, we can see that these were quite refined and followed the ingrained traditions of Chinese poetry.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> For example his poem "Swimming", which is a commentary on Mao's action that had both poetic/performative and political sense – his swimming across the Yangtze River in 1956 to symbolize his power over Chinese nature and people (he repeated the act ten years later, confirming his position as the mighty leader for the years of the Cultural Revolution): "I have just drunk the waters of Changsha / And come to eat the fish of Wuchang. / Now I am swimming across the great Yangtze, / Looking afar to the open sky of Chu. / Let the wind blow and waves beat, / Better far than idly strolling in courtyard. / Today I am at ease. / "It was by a stream that the Master said – / "Thus do things flow away!" / Sails move with the wind. / Tortoise and Snake are still. / Great plans are afoot: / A bridge will fly to span the north and south, / Turning a deep chasm into a thoroughfare; / Walls of stones will stand upstream to the west / To hold back Wushan's clouds and rain / Till a

Therefore, there must be something else, an additional condition that differentiates such poets as, e.g., Rilke and Mao, for the political extremities of the modern era have been viewed as a poetry in a sense. For example, Slavoj Žižek has written about the war criminal Radovan Karadžić, the leader of Bosnian ethnic cleansing, suggesting that by no means was it a weird coincidence that Karadžić was an evil public leader and, at the same time, also a poet – Žižek says that the Bosnian ethnic cleansing was in fact a continuation of poetry by new means (Žižek 2008).<sup>12</sup> The idea is not new – the culture researcher Boris Groys has also spoken about the specific artistic nature of the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century in his “Gesamtkunstwerk Stalin” (Groys 2003).<sup>13</sup> The Soviet project was in some respect a huge modernist art project in which the logic of avant-garde artworks was introduced directly into reality, so that society and people themselves became the material for the techniques of modernist art, real lives and real society were so-to-say rephrased, paraphrased etc. as it usually occurs in a work of art, an artistic text.

As one of the most astonishing examples of that attitude the works and activity of the Russian avant-gardist Alexey Gastev could be introduced. Gastev abandoned writing poems and started to develop his own theory of work – which was not only a theory, but was also practised in his scientific institute in Moscow in the 1920s. His attempts to redesign working people and their lives according to his strict machinist ideology were perceived by him as an artistic activity, which followed his own artistic manifesto. He finished his Manifesto of proletarian art (1919) with the sentence: “We are moving towards the objective expression of things, mechanized masses and striking open grandiosity, that does not know anything intimate and lyrical” (Gastev 2000: 248; my translation – A. P.). As we can see, this is in straight opposition with the vision of Brodsky. Although Gastev became a victim of Stalinist terror at

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smooth lake rises in the narrow gorges. / The mountain goddess if she is still there / Will marvel at a world so changed” (the text is retrieved from <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/poems/poems23.htm>).

<sup>12</sup> Žižek gives an example by Karadžić: “Convert to my new faith crowd / I offer you what no one has had before / I offer you inclemency and wine / The one who won’t have bread will be fed by the light of my sun / People nothing is forbidden in my faith / There is loving and drinking / And looking at the Sun for as long as you want / And this godhead forbids you nothing / Oh obey my call brethren people crowd” (cited in Žižek 2008: 17).

<sup>13</sup> According to Groys, the Russian translation of 2003 is more accurate than that of 1993; the English version *The Total Art of Stalinism* was published by Princeton University Press in 1992.

the end of the 1930s, his artistic ideas made a contribution to weaving the rhetoric and techniques of Soviet totalitarianism.

As Žižek says concerning Karadžić, and as we could say also as concerns totalitarianism as one branch of modernist art: these cases give us a hint why Plato wanted to expel poets from his ideal *polis* – because there is always a possible weird shortcut between literature as a laboratory of standards for language-games, and the language-games themselves.

Here I am coming to the main point of my paper. Thinking about the Gibsonian theory of archive (and laboratory) in the light of Merilai's theory of two contexts, we can see that between the archive of standards (or the narrow context) and the real language-games (or the broad context) there is a certain relation of transference. I think that it is right to say that this relation is metonymic; more exactly, the metonymy exists in the relation between the areas of validity of truth value of speech acts, the contexts of validity. I find it justified to speak of the principle of metonymy – in order to read fiction, poetry or other cases of figural language use so that they would act adequately as parts of the archive of standards, they must be taken as metonymic in relation to real language-games. It is probable that Jaak Tomberg means something similar when he claims: "Real fiction does not change reality itself but the *balance* between necessity and possibility *in reality*: wasted possibilities reach reality (get their embodiment) not by becoming real, but by preserving their quality of possibility, namely by remaining *possibilities as such*."<sup>14</sup> (Tomberg 2010: 76, my translation – A. P.)

If we understand the relation between the figural area and reality in such a way, we can also avoid a simplified understanding of the Gibsonian theory of archive – we have to see the archives of standards as a kind of possibilities, whereas there is a principle of metonymy between possibilities and necessity (reality).

In the same article Tomberg also uses the notion of archive, describing how literary histories are thought to play the role of the archive, while they can only be a partial actualization of that archive (Tomberg 2010: 78–81), and I add – each literary history is metonymic in relation to the imaginable archive of the literary history.

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<sup>14</sup> "Tõeline väljamõeldis ei muuda mitte tegelikkust ennast, vaid paratamatuse ja võimalikkuse *tasakaalu tegelikkuses*: luhtunud võimalikkused pääsevad tegelikkusesse (saavad omale kehastuse) mitte eneste tegelikustumise kaudu, vaid oma võimalikkuse kvaliteeti säilitades, just nimelt *võimalikkuste kui niisugustena*."

The case is similar when it comes to the figural area that acts as an archive for real language-games: in the same way that demanding archive-like exhaustiveness from a literary history means a violation of the principle of metonymy, this also happens in the case of the more fateful instances that were shown previously. I would call this the expansion of the laboratory across its borders, the invasion of mental etalons into the mentality of reality. This could be depicted as a scheme in which the narrow context has broadened to overlap the broad context, or the borders of the narrow contexts have become so fragmentary that they “leak”. In this case the result is very repressive and destructive, quite opposite to the reconciliatory purpose of literature. The sphere of standards/etalons breaks into the real language-game, and the language-game becomes over-determined, the rules become excessively rigid (as Wittgenstein (see PI par 68) – or also Lotman (1998: 391–392) – says, one condition of any effective game is that its rules do not determine everything – for example in tennis there is no rule as to how high the ball can fly). It is a rigid ritual without a reconciling force, where the modality of possibility has been changed for that of actuality, it is a game from which you can step out only by death (real or moral or social). Secondary modelling systems take the place of primary modelling systems. It is as if any time we wanted to measure a metre, we would have to go to Paris and check the standard. Formal perfection prevails over pragmatic effectiveness, aesthetic and artistic aims prevail over ethical ones. The standard – let us remind that according to Wittgenstein it has neither positive nor negative truth value – is suddenly torn into a sphere where things do have truth values; where, more exactly, things cannot lack truth value.

Such misunderstanding and misuse of fiction, poetry and the figural sphere can have so devastating results for the very reason that they have such a crucial – and not at all peripheral or secondary – position among human linguistic activities. The destructive and reconciliatory abilities of the figural sphere are mutually dependent upon each other; one would not be possible without the other and vice versa.

#### **4. Possibilities for further thinking**

I see mainly two possibilities for further thinking. One of them concerns Merilai’s theory of two contexts. Although the scheme is meant to depict a situation involving fictional speech acts, I think, having shown the possibility of a wider interpretation of the scheme, that it can be generalized on more levels. There can

be more than just two contexts in the scheme, so that each broader context acts as an actualization of a narrower context (which is a certain sphere of possibility). For example, we can imagine a scheme in which the narrowest context is a fictional text; around it there is a context of an ideological system that has been built on the basis of that text; around it there is a broader context of, for example, a national culture; around it there is a broad context of some general language-game (and around it we can imagine one more context where language-games are seen as games, as for example the philosophical analysis by Wittgenstein). Each narrower context acquires a certain character of fictionality/figurality if looked at from the perspective of a broader context, and at the same time each narrower context acts as an archive that a broader context must actualize according to the principle of metonymy. Such approach would allow – as we are dealing with contexts that differ in their truth value – to point, among other things, at the differences of ideological and non-ideological discourses (which are always relational – as also fictionality is always a question of relation).

Another possibility to develop my thoughts further is concretizing and nuancing the principle of metonymy by viewing particular cases of acting and violating the principle. For example, the above-mentioned cases of violation belong to modernist avant-gardism, but obviously this is not characteristic only of modernism – let us think, for example, of past occidental or present oriental religious fundamentalism in which fantasies of paradise are transferred into reality without any metonymy. We could ask whether avant-gardism has some specific traits when it comes to such violation (for example, if it was a specific reaction to modernist *l'art pour l'art*?), or whether the avant-garde is nothing more than a transfer of ancient religious and ecstatic patterns into a godless world? An important question is whether the violation of the principle of metonymy does not also justify such changes in society that are described as positive? The only thing that is clear is that the violation always involves a certain danger. In that respect it would be very interesting to analyse the project “Unified Estonia” (Ühtne Eesti) produced by Theatre NO99 in spring 2010 – a simulated establishment of a new populist party which aroused intensive reaction, both positive and negative; it was an artful and skilful simulation of the violation of the principle of metonymy. The project made it possible to observe how people act in such a situation of danger, as well as to imagine what would grow out of this danger. It also posed questions about artistic practices that use invasion into real language-games as their tool, while maintaining the metonymic frame: how exactly is the frame preserved in such a

borderline situation, and by which features such invasive art differs from those human practices that lose the frame and become manipulative and repressive real language-games? These questions seem important to me for we are not dealing only with defining fictionality, figurality etc. We cannot proceed without facing the questions of human freedom and responsibility – for is not this the actual reason to be interested in literature and art?<sup>15</sup>

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### Тезисы о пойетическом принципе метонимичности

В статье рассматривается отношение фикциональных/фигуральных дискурсов к языковым играм действительности. Начальным пунктом является “теория двух контекстов” Арне Мерилая (Merilai 2007a), основная идея которой – разница между фикциональной и фактуальной речью – определяется на основе их разных контекстов значения истинности. Эту идею можно распространить на всю сферу фигуральности. Далее статья рассматривает теорию Джона Гибсона (Gibson 2004), которая

основывается на идеях Виттгенштейна и согласно которой фикция – архив стандартов/эталонов для языковых игр и лаборатория для перерабатывания и создания этих стандартов. Фикциональную/фигуральную сферу можно описывать как территорию возможностей, на которой через пойезис создаются языковые игры. Описываются некоторые случаи, где логика фигуральной сферы перенесена прямо в реальный политический дискурс, заставляя реальность действовать по законам искусства, устраняя таким образом этическую свободу из языковых игр реальности. Это означает, что между фигуральной сферой (как архива и лаборатории стандартов), с одной стороны, и языковыми играми реальности, с другой, существует некоторый принцип метонимичности, и нарушение этого принципа содержит в себе опасность лишения примирительной силы фикциональности/фигуральности, которая по Яаку Томбергу (Tomberg 2011) является значительной функцией литературы как человеческой практики. Некоторые возможности последующего анализа: случаи, где эта опасность может быть трансформирована в нечто позитивное; проблемы и возможности форм искусства (театр определённого вида, хэппенинг), которые используют техники вторжения в реальность; вопрос о том, связано ли специфически это нарушение “принципа метонимичности” с модернистским авангардом или нет.

### **Teese poieetilisest metonüümsuspõhimõttest**

Artikkel vaatleb fiktsionaalsete/figuraalsete diskursuste suhet tegelikkuses toimivate keelemängudega. Lähtepunktiks on Arne Merilai (2007) “kahe konteksti teooria”, mille põhiideeks on fiktsionaalsete ja faktuaalsete kõneaktide eristamine nende erineva tõeväärtuskonteksti alusel. Seda ideed on mõttekas laiendada kogu figuraalsuse sfäärile. Seejärel vaatleb John Gibsoni (2004) wittgensteinlikku teooriat fiktsioonist kui keelemängude standardite/etalonide arhiivist ja nende standardite töötlemise ja loomise laborist. Fiktsionaalset/figuraalset sfääri võib kirjeldada kui võimalikkuse ala, mis loob poiesise kaudu tegelikkuse keelemänge. Seejärel kirjeldab artikkel mõnesid juhtumeid, kus figuraalse sfääri loogika on otseselt üle kantud tegelikku poliitilisse diskursusesse, mis sunnib tegelikkust käituma kunsti reeglite kohaselt, kuid välistab sel moel meie tegeliku elu keelemängude eetilise vabaduse. See tähendab, et figuraalse sfääri (kui standardite arhiivi ja labori) ning tegelikkuse keelemängude vahel on teatav metonüümsuspõhimõte, ja selle põhimõtte rikkumine sisaldab ohtu, et fiktsionaalsus/figuraalsus kaotab oma lepitava jõu, mis Jaak Tombergi (2001) järgi on kirjanduse kui inimpraktika tähtis funktsioon. Edasiseks analüüsiks on mitu võimalust: juhtumid, kus selle ohu võib pöörata millekski positiivseks; tegelikkusse sekkumise tehnikaid kasutavate kunstivormide (teatud liiki teater, happeningid) probleemid ja võimalused; küsimus, kas selline “metonüümsuspõhimõte” rikkumine on spetsiifiliselt seotud modernse avangardismiga või mitte.